

Background

In October 2006, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) began taking steps towards applying to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for a specialized license plate. The plate would generate additional revenue for the SNC and would help create awareness of the need for additional investment in the Region.

To date, a design has been approved and the SNC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Sierra Fund who was responsible for conducting the marketing campaign necessary to secure 7,500 prepaid applications. Following the collection of the first application, the SNC has one year to submit the 7,500 applications.

At the March 2008 Board meeting, the Board was presented with a copy of a marketing plan under the direction of The Sierra Fund and SNC staff. The Board also approved the final plate design at that time.

At the June 2008 Board meeting, Boardmembers indicated the need to increase fundraising efforts and offered assistance in the process. At this point, a number of Boardmembers were contacted for support of the fundraising efforts.

At the December 2008 Board meeting, it was reported that fundraising efforts had been unsuccessful, largely attributed to the current economic situation resulting in a drastic cooling of philanthropic donations.

Current Status

In January 2009, the SNC addressed a meeting of several regional stakeholders to re-evaluate the existing plan to secure 7,500 prepaid applications for license plates needed to initiate production by DMV. At this meeting an update was given outlining the growing need for the SNC to develop additional funding sources given fiscal difficulties faced by state government. The group also discussed the challenges of raising the necessary funds to conduct the campaign and the fact that three additional license plate campaigns that have or are about to commence, which would dramatically impact the market share of potential SNC plate applicants.

Based on the current situation, the group agreed to explore an alternative marketing approach focused on a local grass-roots level. Strong support was expressed by a number of the groups and a subsequent planning meeting was organized by The Sierra Fund in February to begin developing a new strategy.

Next Steps

The SNC will continue to work with The Sierra Fund and a broad network of partners has been identified to assist in the effort and a steering committee is forming. Staff will continue to update the Board on development and implementation of the revised strategy.